



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

September 15, 1998

S. 2432

Assistive Technology Act of 1998

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources
on September 9, 1998*

SUMMARY

S. 2432 would repeal the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988 (TRAIDA) and replace it with a similar program of grants aimed at increasing the availability of technology-related assistance for individuals with disabilities. In addition, S. 2432 would fund certain national activities in the assistive technology field and would make available funding for micro-loan programs that would help individuals finance assistive technology. These programs also are similar to those authorized under the TRAIDA. Enactment of S. 2432 would increase authorizations by \$40 million for 1999 and by \$344 million over the 1999-2003 period, not including adjustments for inflation. The bill would not affect direct spending or receipts and therefore would not be subject to pay-as-you-go procedures.

S. 2432 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA). Any costs to states resulting from enactment of the bill would be incurred voluntarily. The bill would not have any significant effects on the budgets of local or tribal governments.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of S. 2432 is shown in the tables below.

The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 500 (education, training, employment, and social services).

TABLE 1
ESTIMATED BUDGETARY EFFECTS OF S. 2432, WITHOUT ADJUSTMENTS FOR INFLATION

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Authorizations Under Current Law						
Estimated Authorizations	36	36	0	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays	36	36	11	1	0	0
Proposed Changes:						
Title I--State Grants						
Estimated Authorizations	--	36	36	36	36	36
Estimated Outlays	--	25	35	36	36	36
Title II--National Activities						
Estimated Authorizations	--	15	15	15	15	15
Estimated Outlays	--	11	15	15	15	15
Title III--Alternative Financing Mechanisms						
Estimated Authorizations	--	25	25	25	25	25
Estimated Outlays	--	18	24	25	25	25
Title IV--Repeal of TRAIDA						
Estimated Authorizations	--	-36	0	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays	--	-25	-10	-1	0	0
Total Changes						
Estimated Authorizations	--	40	76	76	76	76
Estimated Outlays	--	28	64	75	76	76
Authorizations Under S. 2432						
Estimated Authorizations	36	76	76	76	76	76
Estimated Outlays	36	64	75	75	76	76

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding.

TABLE 2
ESTIMATED BUDGETARY EFFECTS OF S. 2432, INCLUDING ADJUSTMENTS FOR INFLATION

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Authorizations Under Current Law						
Estimated Authorizations	36	37	0	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays	36	37	11	1	0	0
Proposed Changes:						
Title I--State Grants						
Estimated Authorizations	--	36	37	38	39	40
Estimated Outlays	--	25	36	38	39	40
Title II--National Activities						
Estimated Authorizations	--	15	15	16	16	17
Estimated Outlays	--	11	15	16	16	16
Title III--Alternative Financing Mechanisms						
Estimated Authorizations	--	25	26	26	27	28
Estimated Outlays	--	18	25	26	27	27
Title IV--Repeal of TRAIDA						
Estimated Authorizations	--	-37	0	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays	--	-26	-10	-1	0	0
Total Changes						
Estimated Authorizations	--	39	78	80	82	84
Estimated Outlays	--	27	65	78	81	84
Authorizations Under S. 2432						
Estimated Authorizations	36	76	78	80	82	84
Estimated Outlays	36	64	76	79	81	84

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding.

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For each title, the bill would authorize specific amounts for fiscal year 1999 and "such sums as may be necessary" for fiscal years 2000-2004. Under the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), these authorizations would automatically be extended for one year, through fiscal year 2005. The amounts authorized for fiscal year 1999 are used as the basis for estimating the amounts for subsequent years. Historical spending patterns of programs authorized under TRAIDA were used to estimate outlays for programs authorized by this bill.

Title I of S. 2432 would authorize \$36 million for 1999 and such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2000-2004 to continue state grant programs. Under this title, states that received funding under TRAIDA would be eligible to continue to receive funding for public awareness programs, interagency coordination, technical assistance, and training and outreach activities aimed at helping individuals with disabilities use assistive technology devices and services. In addition, this title would authorize grants for capacity building and advocacy related to assistive technology. Title I also would require the Secretary of Education to establish and maintain an Internet site that would provide information about assistive technology.

Title II would authorize national activities, including enhanced coordination responsibilities by the Interagency Committee on Disability Research. This title also would require the National Council on Disability to report to Congress on how federal policies create barriers to increasing the availability and access of technology to individuals with disabilities. In addition, title II would authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to small businesses to assist them with the design, development, and marketing of assistive technology devices. Furthermore, the Secretary could make grants designed to increase technology transfers from the Federal Laboratory Consortium, to increase outreach, and to increase training of engineers and technicians involved in rehabilitative engineering. For these activities, the bill would authorize \$15 million for fiscal year 1999 and such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2000-2004.

Title III would authorize \$25 million for grants to provide alternative financing mechanisms for individuals with disabilities to purchase assistive technology devices and services. Uses for the grants may include programs to help with the purchase or lease of devices or services, as well as loan assistance.

Title IV would repeal the current program dealing with assistive technology. TRAIDA is authorized through fiscal year 1998, but under GEPA it is automatically extended for one fiscal year, through 1999. In fiscal year 1998, the programs authorized by TRAIDA received

appropriations of \$36 million. This appropriation is the basis for estimating the amount authorized for fiscal year 1999. Therefore, repealing this act would reduce authorizations by \$36 million for fiscal year 1999, assuming no adjustments for inflation.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS:

S. 2432 would not affect direct spending or receipts. Therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

S. 2432 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA. The bill would repeal the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act and would replace it with a similar program of grants to states. The new program would target assistance more than current law does by establishing four separate grant programs. (Current law consists of a single grant program.) The bill would also require states to place more emphasis on public awareness and outreach, interagency coordination, and technical assistance and training activities. CBO estimates that any costs to states from these changes would not be significant and would be the result of their voluntary participation in the program. The bill would not have any significant effects on the budgets of local or tribal governments.

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